

P 112307Z APR 86
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7488
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 05231

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: CONTINUED FARC EXTORTION

REF: BOGOTA 5157

¶1. (U) THE COLOMBIAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES (FARC) CONTINUE TO EMPLOY EXTORTION AS A SOURCE OF INCOME. ACCORDING TO AN APRIL 11 STORY IN BOGOTA DAILY "EL SIGLO," GUILLERMO OCAMPO OSPINA, FORMER CONSERVATIVE GOVERNOR OF CALDAS DEPARTMENT, DECLARED THAT HE WAS A RENEWED VICTIM OF THE FARC BEFORE THE MARCH 9 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION. HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER OCCURRED A YEAR AGO WHEN HE HAD TO RANSOM HIS KIDNAPPED BROTHER FROM THE FARC.

¶2. (U) THE FARC, WHO ACCOSTED OCAMPO IN EASTERN CALDAS, REPORTEDLY DEMANDED FROM HIM MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF 500,000 PESOS (2,732 DOLLARS). OCAMPO QUESTIONED WHY THE GUERRILLAS WERE EMPLOYING EXTORTION WHEN THEY WERE PARTIES TO THE PEACE PROCESS THROUGH THE UNION PATRIOTICA (UP). THE FARC MEMBERS RESPONDED THE UP WAS A POLITICAL FRONT THAT HAD NO INFLUENCE ON GUERRILLA CONDUCT. OCAMPO SUBSEQUENTLY SPOKE WITH ALBERTO ROJAS PUYO, COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER OF THE PEACE COMMISSION, WITH NO APPARENT RESULT, AND ATTEMPTED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO CONTACT BRAULIO HERRERA, THE FARC MEMBER OF THE PEACE COMMISSION.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: THIS INCIDENT ILLUSTRATES THE AMBIGUITIES OF THE COLOMBIAN PEACE PROCESS WHICH FAVOR SUCH ACTIONS BY THE FARC. THE FARC CAN EITHER ATTRIBUTE THE EXTORTION TO ANOTHER GUERRILLA GROUP OR ALLEGEDLY DISCIPLINE ITS DISOBEDIENT UNIT. IN EITHER CIRCUMSTANCE, THE FARC CAN BOLSTER ITS IMAGE, AND THAT OF THE UP, AS FAITHFUL ADHERENTS TO THE PEACE PROCESS. AS IN ITS UPCOMING DEALINGS WITH THE PEACE COMMISSION (SEE REFTTEL), THE FARC CAN CULTIVATE SUCH A POSITIVE IMAGE WHILE PROCEEDING WITH BUSINESS AS USUAL.

GILLESPIE##